

THIRTY FIVE CENTS

SEPTEMBER 1955

# MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

**THE GENEVA CONFERENCE**

THE EDITORS

**THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GAW**

RICHARD SASULY

**OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE  
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

JULIUS LEWIN

VOL. 7

5

*Recent Events in Argentina*

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEETZ

## CONTENTS

VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER FIVE SEPTEMBER 1955

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: The Geneva Conference .....	145
RECENT EVENTS IN ARGENTINA .....	153
THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GAW by Richard Sasuly .....	158
OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA by Julius Lewin .....	163
BLACK by Georgia Douglas Johnson .....	169
WORLD EVENTS by Scott Nearing .....	170

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

The response to our first announcement (in last month's issue) of the forthcoming publication of Harvey O'Connor's new book, *The Empire of Oil*, has been good, but still far from good enough to assure the success of the venture. Maybe the deficiency is owing to the summer season. We hope so and urge you, if you have not yet ordered the book, to do so at once. It will be off the press just when you are struggling with your Xmas gift problem—and no matter how much you wrack your brain, you will find no better solution. Table of Contents and details of prepublication offers will be found on the back cover.

Two events, one sad and one cheerful, have been of special concern to us this month. We have just bid a sad farewell to Cedric Belfrage, editor of *The National Guardian*, who was deported on August 15th. At a time

(continued on inside back cover)

## THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

Everyone agrees that the Geneva Conference was an event of the first importance, and yet it is by no means easy to explain why. None of the crucial issues of the cold war was settled. Germany is as far from unification as ever; the arms race continues; the explosive Far Eastern situation was not even discussed. Why, then, is Geneva being hailed—rightly, in our judgment—as a historic turning point?

The commonest answer to this question, in both East and West, is that the conference produced a lessening of international tension. This is all right as far as it goes, but it obviously doesn't go very far. It hardly does more than raise a second question: Why did the conference result in a lessening of tension?

As already noted, the reason certainly does not lie in any settlement of outstanding issues, for nothing of the sort emerged from Geneva. Nor can it be said to lie in the specific statements of the leading participants. True, these statements contained some novel elements, but a careful reading shows that by and large the novelty was more a matter of form than of substance. With relatively unimportant exceptions, Messrs. Eisenhower and Bulganin were saying what they and their predecessors have said on numerous occasions before. The fabled visitor from Mars, on one of his periodic inspection tours to the Earth, will hardly be surprised to learn that both the United States and the Soviet Union are virtuous and peace-loving nations, and that each is longing for a settlement of all disputes—on its own terms. The reports of the Geneva Conference, taken by themselves, will not tell him much more.

All of which is by way of saying that the significance of Geneva derives not from any of its details but from the pattern and context of the conference as a whole. It is not *what* the participants said that is important so much as *how* they said it and, to an even greater extent, the fact that they said it directly to each other and in an atmosphere of cordiality and good will. Nothing of this sort has happened since the wartime conferences of ten and more years ago. What's more, nothing of this sort could have happened in recent years of cold and hot wars. The really new and decisive aspect of the Geneva Conference is that it registers subtle shifts in the attitudes of the United States and the Soviet Union toward international problems in general and toward each other in particular—shifts which, unless reversed, are sure to have momentous consequences.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

What is the nature of these shifts? This, it seems to us, is the key to understanding the true significance of the Geneva Conference.

Two remarks must be made at the outset. First, in the new setting of relaxed tension, Britain and France, under their present right-wing managements, count for little beside the United States and the Soviet Union. Both Eden and Faure are happy to play the role of faithful satellites, and the lessening of the war danger reduces popular pressure on them to pursue a line independent of the United States. In sharp contrast to the last Geneva Conference—that on Far Eastern questions in the summer of 1954—the British and French spokesmen were minor actors this year. Their role in the Western camp was about what one would have expected from Poland and Czechoslovakia had these countries been included on the other side. It is noteworthy in this connection that India, despite vastly inferior military strength, is a much more active and influential factor than Britain in the present international situation. It hasn't always been so, and it won't necessarily be so in the future; but it is so now, and in analyzing Geneva we must take this fact into account. For all practical purposes and for the time being, the Big Four are really the Big Two.

Second, the changes that have taken place in the attitudes of the United States and the Soviet Union are of an essentially symbiotic nature, in the sense that neither could be more than an unrealized tendency unless and until accompanied by the appropriate change in the other. This explains how it is possible that developments which have obviously been a long time in the making could so suddenly mature and find a dramatic public form of expression. This point is so important, and apparently so little understood, that we would perhaps do well to explore it somewhat further.

The whole Soviet attitude in international relations began to change several years ago—no later than the death of Stalin, and more probably as early as the summer of 1952 when Malik first proposed a Korean armistice. But what is most striking about this change is that for a long time it met no comparable response in the West. Soviet overtures were invariably rebuffed; the end of the Korean War by no means marked the end of Far Eastern crises; the threat of a new world war not only did not recede but at times—as in April and May of last year and again early this year—reached a new pitch of intensity. In other words, Soviet efforts to carry out a new foreign policy proved abortive, a fact which found its most pointed expression in the demotion of Malenkov whose name had become identified in the public mind with a policy of accelerating the production of consumer goods. The accession of Bulganin to the premiership coincided with a renewed emphasis on the expansion of heavy industry. The Soviet leadership had decided that since the

new foreign policy had not borne fruit, it would be necessary to prepare for the worst.

This is not to say, however, that the changed attitude toward international affairs was abandoned or reversed. On the contrary, the most dramatic conciliatory moves—Austria and Yugoslavia—closely followed the change in government in Moscow. And since these moves in turn were obvious stepping stones to Geneva, it has been widely assumed that they marked a turning point in Soviet policy which made the Geneva Conference possible.

This is an illusion. What made the Geneva Conference possible was not any change in Soviet policy—in substance there was none—but the fact that now for the first time a comparable change occurred in the United States. We analyzed this change in some detail in a recent issue (see "A Review of the International Situation," MR, June 1955), and there is no need to repeat here. Suffice it to say that the real turning point in the whole international situation came with the collapse last spring of the synthetic Formosa crisis which the Dulles-Radford-Knowland faction of the American ruling class was hoping to use as a *casus belli* against the new China. Americans, who are fundamentally as peace-loving as any people in the world, became alarmed at the maneuvering of the war-now crowd and threw their weight into the scales on the side of reason and moderation. Overnight, what had been a most precarious and dangerous balance in the American ruling class, between the war party and the party of caution, was upset. President Eisenhower, who had spent most of his tenure at the White House as a captive of the extreme right wing of his own party, now found himself, perhaps to his own surprise, more or less free to give expression to his undoubted personal predilection for a peaceful policy of live and let live.

The changed Soviet attitude had at last met a response in the United States. The result was the Geneva Conference.

The big question now, of course, is how stable and durable the new international situation symbolized by Geneva is likely to prove to be. And the answer to this depends, in turn, on whether the changed attitudes of the Soviet Union and the United States are likely to persist.

With regard to the Soviet Union, the answer seems reasonably plain. As noted above, the change there dates back at least to Stalin's death, and it was maintained for a long time in the face of repeated disappointments. Now that the new policy is beginning to pay off as originally hoped and intended, there is no reason whatever to assume that it will be arbitrarily jettisoned.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

The case of the United States is by no means so clear. Is the present eclipse of the war party merely the kind of temporary setback that it has suffered on several occasions before (as, for example, in the MacArthur affair of 1951)? Or has it received a blow from which it is not likely to recover?

It is too early to attempt to give definitive answers to these questions, but something like a balance of probabilities can perhaps be struck.

First and most important, the overall military situation is definitely unfavorable to the recovery chances of the war party. There is no rational prospect of the United States' (or any other country's) being able to win a major war. It is true that this has been the case for some time now, but the point is that knowledge of the real situation has spread relatively slowly and is only now beginning to become what may well be *the* decisive factor in determining the future course of events. When it is widely known that war is suicide, the war party labors under a staggering handicap; if and when it becomes universally known, the handicap may be expected to prove insurmountable. We are perhaps approaching this stage right now.

A second factor in the present situation is more complex and difficult to evaluate. We have long been of the opinion that a lasting change in United States foreign policy would necessarily be accompanied by changes in domestic policy. We have assumed, in other words, that the two are inseparably connected, that the cold war and the witch hunt are Siamese twins. This has been negatively confirmed on various occasions in the last ten years: previous setbacks for the war party have not been accompanied by comparable changes in the atmosphere at home—or rather, what changes have taken place in the domestic atmosphere have been for the worse, not for the better. Under the circumstances, the war party, like Antaeus in the Greek myth, rebounded from each defeat with redoubled energy and determination. In recent months, by contrast, a real change for the better has taken place in the domestic atmosphere. Not that the witch hunt is all over, of course, but certain developments—especially decisions of the courts which are particularly sensitive indicators in these matters—show that the tide has definitely turned. The national mood of intolerance and hysteria that nourished the war party seems to have been replaced by another mood, or perhaps a variety of moods, which cannot as yet be characterized with accuracy but which at any rate offers little sustenance or encouragement to the war party. Coming at a time when the war party needs all the assistance it can get, this may be a crucially important factor. Moreover, if relaxation of tensions persists for a while in both the international and domestic spheres, a sort of chain reaction may be

set in motion which might even result in the virtual wiping out of the war party.

Growing knowledge of the military situation and a national mood of greater rationality and tolerance, then, are the chief factors which suggest that the present eclipse of the war party is more than a temporary setback. On the other side, one must take account of the enormous accumulated momentum of a decade of cold war and witch hunt, and one must frankly recognize that the present situation, for all its encouraging aspects, is confused and unstable. Overoptimism is totally inappropriate: the forces of darkness are still strong and are undoubtedly far from having exhausted their strategic or tactical resources. Anyone who has probed the hidden history of the last hundred years knows how important a role provocation can play at certain crucial junctures when forces are uncertainly matched and great issues hang in the balance. We seem to be at such a historical juncture now, and we dare not take a favorable outcome for granted.

So much, it seems to us, is clear. At the same time, the chance of a favorable outcome, in the sense of a permanent defeat of the United States war party, now so obviously exists that we can no longer avoid exploring its possible implications. To do so would be to refuse to seek the understanding that may be sorely needed in the very near future. Let us, then, ask and try to answer the question which is implicit in recent developments: If the spirit of Geneva continues to dominate United States foreign policy, how is that policy itself likely to evolve in the period ahead?

As we have stressed time and again in these pages, American policy since FDR's death more than ten years ago has been to subjugate the socialist world by means of a great capitalist coalition spearheaded by remilitarized Germany and Japan. Now, it is obvious enough that the continued active pursuit of this policy is incompatible with the spirit of Geneva. There are therefore two possibilities: (1) American policy can be explicitly changed as to both ultimate aims and chosen means, or (2) hitherto dominant purposes and methods can be retained at the ideological level while being largely ignored in practice. The whole of American history, all our national traditions and habits of thought, strongly indicate that the second course is the one that is likely to be followed. A nation that can praise the Bill of Rights to the skies while energetically stamping out all manifestations of dissent can surely combine the ultimate objective of world domination with a practical policy of live and let live. What this means, in effect, is that the architects of United States foreign policy may well go on proclaiming the untenability and unacceptability of the *status quo*, while in fact tacitly acquiescing in it as the basis of a *modus vivendi* with the socialist countries.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

This is not the occasion to attempt to explore all the implications of such a permanent shift in United States policy, but a few general remarks, in the nature of stimulants to further thought and analysis, may not be out of order.

First, it is clear that the *status quo* needs a good deal of tidying up around the edges. In particular, there are situations such as Formosa which are a grave source of weakness to the United States and which it would be sensible to try to maintain only as jumping-off places for aggressive action against the socialist bloc. Here the United States will have to disengage without losing too much face, a process which may well take a long time and require considerable diplomatic and political skill. Fortunately, the United Nations is an institution ideally suited to facilitate such operations, provided only that the will to carry them through exists. (Needless to say, the admission of the Chinese Peoples Republic to the UN would have to be a part of a Formosa solution.)

Second, even after such acute questions as Formosa have been settled, there will remain very important differences between the United States and the Soviet Union on how the *status quo* ought to be modified and, so to speak, codified as part of a lasting peace. The United States will almost certainly want to divide the world into two sharply demarcated blocs, with the boundary between them drawn as narrowly as possible around territory now controlled by Communist-led governments. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, will favor the conception of a broad buffer zone of uncommitted states. This is a fundamental clash of views which is unlikely to be resolved by any amount of negotiating. Fortunately, however, it need not lead to an open break, still less to war, because in the final analysis the decision between a narrow boundary and a broad zone will be made not by the United States and the Soviet Union, either jointly or separately, but by the countries which lie on the frontiers of the two systems. They will make up their own minds about whether they want to belong to one of the power blocs or whether they want to remain neutral between the two, and there is little likelihood that either the Soviet Union or the United States will be prepared to go to war to prevent them from implementing their decisions. In this connection, the example of Yugoslavia, which moved out of the Soviet bloc halfway into the American bloc and back to neutrality even in the worst years of the cold war, is instructive and reassuring.

Third, it is within the context of this struggle between the two frontier conceptions that the great diplomatic contests of the years ahead will probably occur. One can already see, for example, that the German problem is a case in point: behind a smokescreen of pro-unification talk, the United States is doing all it can to keep West



Germany in the NATO grouping; while the Soviet Union, arguing that the time is not yet ripe for unification, is waiting until some future West German government is prepared seriously to discuss a deal which would reunite Germany in exchange for the neutralization of the whole country. Similarly, Japan and India, the other two great frontier countries, seem destined to be objects of intense rivalry, in these cases between the United States and the new China. The United States will try to hold onto Japan and persuade India to give up its independent status; while China, backed of course by the USSR, will encourage India to continue on its present road and at the same time try to induce Japan to travel in the same direction.

The foregoing analysis of the Geneva Conference and its implications has made no attempt to go beyond the sphere of international relations in the narrow sense of relations among governments. That this is an important sphere, the one in which decisions for war or peace are taken, needs no emphasis these days. What does need emphasis is that this is *not* where the great controlling forces of history take shape and operate. It follows from this fact that an analysis confined to the sphere of international relations has a strictly limited validity, and that the further into the future it is projected the less reliable it is bound to be.

All of which is by way of warning against taking too seriously the efforts of statesmen, whether American or Russian or both, to control or adapt or otherwise base their plans on the *status quo*. For the *status quo* itself is always changing in response to the deeper currents of history, and in the long run it is the statesmen who are controlled rather than the other way round.

Looking at the international scene in this post-Geneva summer of 1955, one might be tempted to predict a long period, perhaps running into decades, of relative stability in which the two great world systems, capitalism and socialism, test each other's strength and intentions and learn to live together in peace if not in amity. In reality, it is not likely to happen that way. Capitalism, now enjoying one of those boom periods which have always punctuated its history, will once again, and perhaps sooner rather than later, head into a time of crises and conflicts. Socialism, still struggling to establish itself in backward countries of low technique and little inherited capital, has hardly begun to realize the vast potential wealth and the high cultural standards which modern science promises to a society rationally planned to meet the human needs of its members. The colonial and semi-colonial peoples of Africa, Latin America, and large parts of Asia are at the beginning rather than the end of their revolt against alien exploitation and for the right to determine their own future.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

These are the great forces that are operating below the surface, and in the years ahead they will produce new situations, new problems, and new opportunities. The Geneva Conference unquestionably marked the end of one historic era and the opening of another. A new era of peace, we hope—of change, we are certain.

(August 10, 1955)

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*If, therefore, the choice were to be made between Communism with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindles as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessities of life; if this, or Communism, were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism, would be but as dust in the balance.*

—John Stuart Mill, Volume I, *Principles of Political Economy*.

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*We shall forget that within our own borders there are also two civilizations at war with each other, and the lust to get empire abroad will darken the counsels of justice at home. . . . It was an idle dream that we could progress from perfection to perfection while the Chinese ossified, and the Cubans and Philippine people were disembowelled, and the Africans continued to eat each other, and I am content to wake from it.*

—Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1898

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*Nothing could be sounder than the Communists' attitude toward war. For them the plumes, glitter and tinsel are gone. They see it for what it really is, viz., organized reciprocal mass murder. Deep is their disgust at having to switch farm-machinery factories to making munitions which will probably lie in piles somewhere until they are spoiled or obsolete. At the same time they have no intention of letting the Japanese militarists help themselves to Soviet territory.*

—Edward Alsworth Ross, *Seventy Years of It* (p. 174), 1936

## RECENT EVENTS IN ARGENTINA

The following memorandum was prepared by a group of left-wing observers inside Argentina, for the purpose of helping to clarify to outsiders the meaning of recent developments in that country. It contains interesting and significant facts—especially about the role of the United States Ambassador—which, so far as we know, have not been publicly reported anywhere. In addition, the overall interpretation of the Argentine situation seems to us to be eminently sound—and of course totally unfamiliar to the average reader of the United States press. What follows is the translation of a French text furnished to us by an Argentine citizen now living in Europe.—THE EDITORS

The bombs which insurgent naval airmen dropped on Buenos Aires on June 16th left President Peron physically unscathed, but politically they finished him off. This fact emerges clearly from the events which took place in Argentina both before and after June 16th, events which can be summed up as follows:

(1) The revolt of June 16th had been in preparation for several months. The navy took the initiative, but it quickly won the support of important groups in the army and airforce. The objective was to eliminate both Peron himself and the corrupt, demagogic system of "Peronism," and to substitute a military government of a conservative nature, backed by a majority of the political parties, especially those of the Right, and supported by Washington. The conflict between Peron and the Church came later and helped to solidify anti-Peronist sentiment in the army and navy.

(2) On June 16th, the *coup d'état* was to have taken place at 6:30 a.m. It had to be put off until noon because of bad weather.

(3) At 11 a.m., an hour and a half before the first bombs fell, Peron granted an audience to the United States Ambassador, Mr. Nufer, on a matter of urgency. The audience had not been scheduled in advance. No one knows what was discussed. Nevertheless, when it was over, Peron left his office and took refuge either in the Ministry of War or in some other building which was immune to the aerial bombardment which began a few minutes later.

(4) The details of this mysterious intervention of the American Ambassador only began to become known as the result of declarations made by certain of the conspirators to the War Council before which they were arraigned: Nufer was aware of the plot and was in contact with the navy. At the last minute, he decided to play a more subtle game than the mere physical elimination of Peron. In agreement with Peron, and with General Lucero who was also a participant in the plot, Nufer decided not to yield to the revolutionaries but to make a deal with them. Peron would remain as nominal

## MONTHLY REVIEW

head of the government, but he would be under orders of a military group and he would carry out the following program: (a) gradual and prudent (the exact word in Spanish is *parsimionoso*) changes in the government: successive resignation of ministers, replacement of high Peronist functionaries; (b) suppression of the political role of the CGT [the trade union federation] and of the Peronist party as instruments of totalitarian government; (c) renunciation by Peron of all ambition to be re-elected a third time; (d) gradual and prudent return to a constitutional regime and to the enjoyment of political and civil liberties, with a view to preparing a transition to a non-totalitarian government of a civilian-military character; (e) eventual amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles, especially the rebels of June 16th; (f) cancellation of all measures taken against the Catholic Church.

(5) Peron accepted this compromise. He ordered the disarmament of the CGT and of his own Peronist party, and he put himself under the protection and control of Lucero and his friends. Having tried for ten years to create a fascist regime based on the support of the masses, the chief finally preferred to save his own skin and to desert his *descamisados* (the shirtless ones). Ten years of demagoguery lost in a half hour of personal cowardice—this demonstrates the whole weakness of the Peronist structure.

(6) The pact is being applied. Peron has given up the presidency of the Peronist party, which amounts to decapitating it and depriving it of all power to act independently. He has ordered the Secretary of the CGT to resign, which amounts to dissolving this organization. He has separated himself from his ministers and collaborators, from his demagogic "Left"—men like Borlenghi, Minister of the Interior, Mendez San Martin, Minister of Education, and Raul Apold, Secretary of Propaganda. He has stretched out his hand to politicians whom he formerly called "traitors to the fatherland." He has freed political prisoners and authorized the publication of oppositional newspapers. It has also been announced that more than a hundred Peronist Deputies have handed in their resignations to Peron, which suggests that the dissolution of Parliament is contemplated. In a word, Peron has committed political suicide to keep from being assassinated. He has abandoned his friends to save himself. His friends of yesterday now call him "el payaso" (the clown).

(7) Ambassador Nufer, like his colleague Peurifoy, Ambassador to Guatemala, has attained his objective, at least for the moment. In a Fourth of July speech, he declared that Argentina is a citadel against Communist subversion on the continent, and added that relations between the United States and Argentina are improving every day and that various economic contracts would be signed similar

## RECENT EVENTS IN ARGENTINA

to that recently concluded with one of the Standard Oil companies for the exploitation of Argentina's petroleum resources.

(8) Nevertheless, one cannot say that things have yet ended in Argentina as happily for Wall Street as was the case in Guatemala. Certain chapters, the outcome of which still cannot be foreseen, have still to be written. The army is divided among those who want to have done with Peron once and for all, those who want to keep him as a figurehead, those who want to install a pro-American dictatorship, and those who wish to return power to the political parties and to defend their country against all foreign imperialisms. The CGT is decapitated and abandoned by Peron, but it is not dead: the workers have just been through an experience, and they are chasing out their false prophets; but they are not giving up their organization, which numbers six million members in a country of sixteen million inhabitants. The political parties are likewise divided. Some are disposed to collaborate with any government that will eliminate Peron; others are ready to accept American "assistance" and contracts; still others are preparing for political action, in conjunction with the CGT and the progressive elements among Peron's mass following, with a view to establishing a progressive democratic regime. In this latter category one finds the two main popular forces. One of these owes its importance to its numerical strength: the Radical Party, led by a very talented young lawyer, Arturo Frondizi, accounts for about a third of the country's total vote. The other, the Communist Party, owes its importance to its methods of penetrating the Peronist workers' movement which is now particularly susceptible because of Peron's desertion. To these groups must be added certain others: a small number of young people and workers from the Socialist Party, the Democratic Progressive Party, and even the Conservative Party; as well as all left-wing student movements which constitute extremely important centers of agitation inside the middle class.

Other anti-imperialist elements are the following: a part of the national bourgeoisie whose interests are opposed to the penetration of foreign capital; the majority of intellectuals; and a large proportion of young army and navy officers.

### The Present Situation

The situation in Buenos Aires continues to be unstable. Both the military and the masses are pushing hard for an end to the "nominal" government of Peron; they want to force Peron's resignation. Although it is officially denied that Peron has in fact resigned, it might happen any day now.

Meanwhile, the political parties and the workers are intensely

## MONTHLY REVIEW

active in organizing their forces and in deriving what advantages they can from the contradictions and quarrels inside the governing circles. The Catholics continue to want to organize their own political party, and one can already see in this connection the two tendencies which are so evident in France and Italy—one conservative and clerical, under the thumb of the Vatican; the other to the Left, promoting a concrete social program, and anxious to defend economic interests against imperialist encroachment.

The mass of the membership of the Peronist party and of the CGT, betrayed by Peron, are aiming to create a "laborite" party to protect the interests of the workers. One important symptom of the present situation is emerging: the contract with Standard Oil, which opens up a vast region of the country to the exploitation of this foreign company, seems to be meeting with enormous resistance in the national Congress (which has still to ratify it) where the great majority of the legislators are Peronists.\* Earlier, Peron had succeeded in overcoming this resistance and in securing the promise of the Peronist legislators to vote for the accord. But since Peron has ceased to be the all-powerful head of the party, the legislators have recovered their independence and today are defending their reputations in the eyes of the masses. It may be this last-minute resistance to ratifying the pact with Standard Oil which explains reports that the pro-American military group which holds Peron prisoner is about

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\* Some of the details of this proposed deal between the Argentine government and the Standard Oil Company of California were revealed by J. H. Carmical, petroleum editor of the *New York Times*, on June 12: The Argentine government "will have no control . . . over the administration of the Standard of California subsidiary incorporated in Delaware to direct the Argentine project. . . . For the life of the contract, the company has free import rights for all equipment needed for the carrying out of the contract. Funds may be brought into the country without restriction or taxes. All sums received by the company in local currency may be freely remitted abroad at the exchange rate provided in the contract. . . . The price at which crude oil is to be sold to the [Argentine] government agency is based on East Texas field prices less 5 percent. . . . The company is exempt from all contributions, taxes, and charges, direct or indirect, except income and excess profits taxes. These are limited to 50 percent of net profits in any year. . . . No royalty payments on oil are to be exacted by the government, nor are there any bonus or rental payments on the land. . . . If the government should terminate the contract, it would have to make payment to the company in dollars of the unrecovered part of the total investment, the probable net profit, based on existing reserves, that the company would have obtained during the remaining life of the contract, and 25 percent of the field value of the crude oil produced after cancellation from the zones considered to be promising by the company at the time of cancellation. . . . Provision is made for the settling of any disputes regarding economic, financial, commercial or accounting matters by arbitration." (*New York Times*, June 12, Sect. 3. Emphasis added.) No comment seems needed—except perhaps that Standard Oil seems to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.—THE EDITORS

## RECENT EVENTS IN ARGENTINA

to dissolve Congress under the pretext of giving wider representation to the opposition parties. It has been officially announced that the Minister of the Interior has informed American oil interests that there is little chance of the pact's being approved by the present Congress.

The Radical Party, both through its national executive committee and through certain leaders of the so-called "unionist" fraction which is in disagreement with the majority of the national committee, has opposed the Standard Oil deal. And the same is true of all student groups which, in Argentina, play a very important role in public life.

To sum up, a new chapter of Argentine history has begun. After ten years of fake Peronist leftism, the true values of a progressive democracy (which includes the workers and the petty bourgeois Peronists) are being defended in struggle against the reactionary elements of the army and against the civilians and politicians of the Right who want to replace Peron by a conservative, pro-American government. The fight is on, and everything that is now happening in Buenos Aires, or that will happen in the months to come, is a reflection of this fight. The demagogy and the immorality of the fascist regime have acted as a stimulant to a people which has a flare for politics and which, as recent events have shown, has been neither crushed nor bought by Peron's dictatorship.

The popular masses of Argentina, under Peron, have undergone the same experience of a social-demagogic nationalism that the Germans lived through in the Hitler period and the Italians under Mussolini. Today, as in postwar Germany and Italy, the collapse of the system is liberating profound forces which were regimented by Peron. Among these forces are those who would revive the outworn world of before the war, as well as those who wish to awaken the nascent world of after the war. This dialectical opposition furnishes the key to the Argentine problem and to the events which began on June 16th. Without this key, there is a danger that the Argentine episode will be confused with the kind of Latin American *coup d'état* which is all too familiar from the history of the past. Things have changed in 1955, even in South America. The notion of "timing" so dear to newspaper editors should enable the latter to understand that Latin American revolutions, too, have their "timing."

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*There is only one evil greater than reform by force—the perpetuation, the permanence of injustice.*

—Henry Demarest Lloyd

## THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GAW

BY RICHARD SASULY

The biggest labor development since the AFL-CIO merger agreement was the winning last June of what the United Auto Workers call the Guaranteed Annual Wage.

Whether or not the GAW now sets a pattern for all union bargaining—as the winning of pensions by the coal miners did—the conclusion of new contracts with Ford and General Motors gave UAW President Walter P. Reuther his most shining hour of publicity.

The signing of the contracts made headlines. Reuther's picture emerged on magazine covers. And, most important of all as a feat in public relations, the term GAW has stuck.

What the union won in its new Ford and GM contracts actually has little to do with annual wages. Rather, the contracts contain a plan for boosting unemployment benefits at company expense. Reuther has persistently called this a guaranteed wage plan, and so the term remains.

As a personal matter for Reuther, the plan has had an unquestionable success. For the first time in twenty years, what looks like a really major, corner-turning device in labor relations has been produced by someone other than John L. Lewis. The AFL-CIO merger agreement pushed Reuther somewhat to the side. Other men had forced him to move. Furthermore, the automobile industry had said it would not grant GAW. Financial journals accused the union of making ruinous demands. And then the contract was signed, and the UAW leaders smiled at the cameras.

Some sounds of doubt and dissatisfaction were heard. Curiously, they came from among the auto workers themselves, presumably the beneficiaries of the GAW contract. This by no means demonstrates, however, that the contract was a sellout: the objections from within the union were of rather special kinds.

Members of the UAW Ford Local 600, for example, voted better than 2-to-1 to ratify. The vote was closest in two departments employing a high percentage of skilled men. The tool and die department approved the contract by a margin of only 1255 to 1143, and maintenance ratified by only 1782 to 1700. The skilled men had long thought they should have more of a wage differential over

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## THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GAW

production workers. They have even made some gestures toward pulling out of UAW. The GM and Ford contracts this year did provide extra pay for the skilled workers, but apparently it was not enough. Still another special factor, which explains some votes against GAW but has nothing in particular to do with GAW itself, is the deep-seated resentment against Reuther which persists among many of his old opponents.

So far as the merits of the plan itself are concerned, the truth is that full returns will not be in for a long time. A great deal must depend on how the plan is applied and under what circumstances.

In outline, the plan provides the following: A fund is built up by employer contributions. The contributions, as set in the present contracts, amount to 5 cents per worker per hour. When the fund reaches a specified level—for example \$55 million in the case of Ford under the present agreement—the contributions cut off. In no case is the company subject to unlimited liability to provide unemployment benefits.

The fund built up by a company provides supplemental unemployment benefits for workers who may later be laid off by that company. These benefits are in addition to the benefits regularly received under state unemployment compensation schemes. The private system is specifically pegged to the government system, the aim being that eventually the company fund should add enough to regular government benefits to bring the total to about 60 percent of wages for a period of 26 weeks. For every week the worker is employed he receives credit. During the first two years, the credits pile up slowly; after the first two years, the number of credits earned doubles. How much a worker receives from the fund, if he is laid off, depends on the number of credits he has earned and on the size of the fund. Workers with greater seniority enjoy certain advantages over those with less seniority.

Almost all the stories about GAW have given the impression that the plan sprang full-blown from the United Auto Workers. Actually, most of the present plan originated in one of the last projects of the waning New Deal. Late in 1943, the United Steelworkers proposed a form of guaranteed wage. The idea was taken up by the War Labor Board which in turn passed it along to the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion. The latter agency set Murray Latimer and a group of New Deal economists to work on the project. The Latimer group issued its report in January 1947. From first to last, incidentally, the Latimer study was tied in with the steel industry. Latimer himself served after the war as an independent economic consultant for the steel union, particularly in regard to the guaranteed wage problem.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

While Philip Murray lived, the guaranteed wage was particularly the project of his union, the United Steelworkers. On behalf of Murray and the union, Latimer submitted a fully developed plan to the Wage Stabilization Board. In March 1952, the WSB ruled unanimously that the plan should be studied by both union and management. However, this ruling disappeared in the settlement of the steel strike of 1952. After the death of Murray, David J. McDonald took over as head of the Steelworkers. McDonald maintained peculiarly intimate relations with the steel industry. Apparently the guaranteed wage plan did not fit into that relationship. The steel union dropped GAW, and Reuther picked it up. The auto industry contracts of June 1955 follow the lines set down in the Latimer studies for steel.

It should be noted that Latimer himself reported that as far back as 1946 his group found at least 196 different guaranteed wage plans in operation. Something over 60,000 workers were involved. The earliest of the plans went back to 1894. Some 15 plans were operating before 1921, and all but five of these were still functioning in 1946. For the most part, the plans covered miscellaneous industries of middle size, including Hormel Packing and Nunn-Bush Shoe Co.

The early plans, of course, predated government unemployment insurance. The Latimer type of plan, adopted now for the first time by the major auto companies, jumps off from the existing unemployment compensation system. This establishes the framework within which all discussion and negotiations now take place.

The simplest objection to GAW as it now stands takes a strict, cash-on-the-line, union bargaining position. The argument holds that a cash raise in pay must always be better than fringe benefits, whether the latter take the form of payments for pensions, a health and welfare fund, or supplemental unemployment benefits in lieu of guaranteed annual employment. According to this line of reasoning, the fringe form of payment necessarily involves forced savings, imposed on workers by employers. Rather than waiting for their gains, the argument runs, workers should take them now.

This argument is more convincing in the abstract than it has proved to be in practice. The pioneer in fringe benefits on a grand scale was John L. Lewis when he negotiated the pension and welfare fund agreements for coal miners following World War II. It was hard to accuse Lewis of advocating pie-in-the-sky since he had led the way, during the war, in registering straight cash gains for his membership. Rather, his venture into pension funds, followed by almost all other unions, reflected what seems to have been a profound understanding of what his people wanted. Above all, they

## THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF GAW

wanted security. And there may have been an underlying fear that inflation continuously robbed present cash raises of some of their attractiveness.

A more weighty argument against GAW involves seniority. In general, it is pointed out that workers cannot receive the non-cash benefits negotiated for them by their union unless they stay around a long time, and generally in the same shop. The man who wants to switch jobs, or trade, is more likely than not to lose his rights under the various fringe plans. In the recent auto contracts, moreover, the importance of seniority is stressed more than ever: in the early stages of building up the fund, workers with less than five years seniority use up credits much more rapidly than workers with high seniority.

As the value of seniority increases, the once cherished freedom to tell a boss off and to move on fades, perhaps to a vanishing point. The power of any kind of blacklist grows. However, a strong, effective, and thoroughly decent union leader, while troubled by this point, might still look at it with a reasonably cool and dispassionate eye. For this same process of rooting workers down also serves to perfect union machinery.

The new GAW plan puts a somewhat different light on the question of forced savings. It is clear that in some cases fringe benefits not only are deferred gains: they may never be received at all. In the case of the auto contracts, very little if anything can be received in the first two years. The union computed that it had won a 20-cent an hour package increase, five cents of which was GAW money. If the five cents truly belong in the package, then this must be regarded as an increase with a built-in potential for ending itself. That is, if employment stays high and there is no run on the fund, the union negotiated a self-ending pay raise.

Still on the assumption of no depression, it is said the GAW plan may spur management to plan production so as to stabilize employment. This may happen. In fact, GAW as now drafted might be an entering wedge for more far-reaching employment stabilizing plans. The danger here is that the number of stable jobs might be smaller than present employment. Once more, the workers with lowest seniority would suffer.

In general, it can be said that the plan gambles on avoiding a serious depression. If the gamble fails, if the economy hits a big slide, the plan is unlikely to do more than ease the burden of the first year. However, this is not exactly a fair criticism of the plan. The government unemployment compensation system is not rigged for serious economic difficulty either.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

In this connection, it must be emphasized that through the so-called GAW plan, a piece of union-management apparatus has been set up parallel to existing government apparatus. It is impossible to avoid asking: why cannot the government do the whole job better and more fairly? To this there can surely be no sensible answer except the pragmatic one: The government isn't doing it, so the unions might as well make the best arrangements they can.

This last point, of course, applies just as much to pensions. Company schemes were needed because the social security system had lagged far behind what was needed for the aged, just as unemployment compensation has lagged behind what is needed to relieve even moderate unemployment.

A long-range question asks if the unions are not bending themselves out of shape by joining in plans like GAW. Clearly, GAW and other fringe plans have increasingly involved unions in side-by-side, joint planning with management. It may be remembered that it once was argued by some that workers signed away their rights when they entered into *any* kind of contract with employers. If this seems extreme, it can be noted that after the settlement of the 1934 West Coast longshore strike, some criticized the joint hiring hall which was established as part of the settlement. Actually, as it worked out in practice, the longshore hiring hall proved to be a cornerstone for labor organization throughout the West. In other words, a charge which seemed to make sense at the time proved to be quite wrong.

So it may be in the case of GAW. Undeniably, the United States may be headed toward establishment of something like a Labor Front. If this happens, then certainly GAW and similar plans will be pointed to as markers along the way. But this is far from inevitable. In the final analysis, the shape and significance of GAW will depend on how it is applied. It is a fact that the pension system has firmly established the idea that working people are entitled to pensions. GAW could in the end serve chiefly to establish the idea that people whose pay is figured in hourly rates are as entitled to year-round guarantees as salaried people. Basically, this idea is political. It points to the possibility that unions may now receive quiet support from corporations when they press for improvement of unemployment compensation systems. The same thing has already happened in regard to old-age benefits under the social security system. In the long run, the direct economic effects of the GAW plan—in terms of seniority and forced savings and union responsibility for management functions—may fade in the light of the political effects.

## OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY JULIUS LEWIN

*We are narrowing our political and social rights. We are trying to withdraw even educational advantages from the mass of our people, who are Africans. [Now that] we have had our big Native wars and dispossessed the African of his land, we may get cheap labour for the mine-owners and the farmers, but we shall have created such a terrible proletariat as will be our ultimate undoing.*

So Olive Schreiner wrote about the Union of South Africa—in 1912 when the new self-governing state was in its infancy. This year, when the centenary of Olive Schreiner's birth was celebrated, her books were quoted to a generation which hardly recognized her name but which knew that her words were truer today than when she wrote them.

South Africa presents a paradox to the world. Here is a country that seems to be riper for revolution than any other, yet the years pass and nothing like a revolution occurs. Those who know the country do not really anticipate a profound change in the coming years, unless war or slump disrupts the world. What is the explanation?

For the last thirty years, South Africa has been in the throes of an industrial revolution. Originally a small, feudal-agricultural colony, its economy was transformed by the discovery first of diamonds and then gold in the 1870s. From the beginning, the mines were run on the cheap labor of primitive Bantu-speaking tribesmen, of whom there are now half a million in such employment. Mining dominated the economy and the politics of the country until after World War I. Then manufacturing industries sprang up and, aided by the favorable conditions presented by World War II, multiplied

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## MONTHLY REVIEW

and prospered, and they still keep the economy expanding. Today they are the largest contributor to the national income, having outstripped even mining, but this fact is not reflected in politics. The reason why it is not must be sought in the country's dependence on gold, uranium (a by-product of gold mining), and base minerals as exports, and partly in the dependence of the many small secondary industries on the mining corporations for capital. Certainly the new industrialists have never sought to build a political party of their own. Although a mild liberalism should suit their pockets better than the unwavering conservatism of the mine owners, who look to the United Party, English-speaking businessmen are not active in politics.

The large growth of new industries has drawn to the cities two streams of wage earners entirely separated from each other by race. The one is the white Afrikaner working class now composed of skilled artisans and semi-skilled men of all types whose fathers and grandfathers were the farmers known to the world as "the Boers." (Incidentally, Afrikaners also man all the public services, including the police force, and all government departments from top to bottom.) These men are organized in exclusively white labor unions and nine-tenths of them support the Nationalist Party which controls the present government. The second stream of workers is the larger one of unskilled Africans on whose labor industry, like mining, rests. This class now forms about 70 percent of those employed in industry and mining. Broadly speaking, the function of white workers, now earning a comfortable average wage of about \$2,000 a year, is to supervise and direct the efforts of black workers earning a low average wage of about \$360 a year. Very few of the black workers are organized in their own labor unions, partly because they are illiterate and partly because the law refuses recognition to African unions and prevents their organization.

Both the white Afrikaner and the black African workers are at heart moved by race rather than by class. The Afrikaner has been taught, in separate Afrikaner schools, a version of South African history that makes the African his first and the British his second enemy. The "late unpleasantness" of the Anglo-Boer war and of the earlier wars with the Bantu is a tradition, like the Civil War to Southerners in the United States. The Afrikaner naturally sees in the Nationalist Party his present shield and his future hope. All the daily papers published in his language, Afrikaans, are closely controlled by the Nationalist Party. It follows that the Afrikaners are now virtually impervious to propaganda designed to wean them from their racial allegiance. For a generation or more, they have done all their thinking with their blood. No one seriously believes that political change will come in the foreseeable future through the conversion of Afrikaners to a new outlook. And, thanks to their high birth rate and

their refusal to encourage immigrants from abroad, the Afrikaners number over 60 percent of the white population, a proportion that continues to rise.

The English-speaking group numbers about a million. Since 1948, when the Nationalists came to power, this group has begun to see itself as a permanent minority unable to exercise in the future the political power it enjoyed in the past. Significantly, its United Party is now declining so obviously that failure is obvious to everyone. Leaderless since Smuts died five years ago, it lacks an alternative program to the Nationalists' powerful slogan of *apartheid* or rigid racial segregation. If the United Party does not actually die (and it won't), the reason is that it holds some 45 safe urban seats in Parliament (out of a total of 159) and is run by semi-professional politicians of a type familiar in the United States. But its survival in one form or another cannot affect the present balance of power which increasingly favors the government under an electoral system that excludes all but white people.

Economically, however, the English middle class has prospered in commerce, industry, and mining, and they now find it convenient to take little part in politics, leaving the machinery of the state to be run by Afrikaners. Here is a curious phenomenon: the economic power wielded by the English is divorced from political power, which is entirely in Afrikaner hands. At bottom this is explicable by the satisfaction that the giant mineowners feel with a government that guarantees them a supply of cheap, migrant black labor. Moreover, the English group is influenced by the interests of Britain and the United States which provide a large part of all the non-agricultural capital invested in the country. The British interest goes right back to the opening of the mines in the nineteenth century and remains strong even though capital has increasingly accumulated within South Africa, including Afrikaner capital. The American interest is relatively recent but has risen quickly. According to figures published by the United States Department of Commerce, direct private American investment amounted in 1952 to \$194 million, or three times the total invested by Americans in the British colonial areas of West, East, and Central Africa. (A breakdown shows \$67 million in petroleum, \$55 million in manufacturing, \$47 million in mining, and \$19 million in trade.) No wonder that Washington, like London, has never exerted any pressure against the racial policies pursued by the South African government.

From white people, there has never come any effective opposition to the subjection of the Africans. Most of the white voters, whether they support the Nationalist Party or the United Party, are agreed in principle to deny advancement to Africans in every sphere.

## MONTHLY REVIEW

There is, however, a small Liberal Party. Formed in 1953, this party has attracted very little support from white voters and very little interest from Africans. It has not proved viable, and the inevitable compromises it has made in facing white voters have failed to increase its influence. On the contrary, the white electorate declines to support even a diluted liberal policy, however it may be hedged around with assurances that white supremacy will not thereby suffer. And the even smaller white Labor Party, in spite of belated improvement in its racial policies, is clearly doomed to extinction at the next general election.

By now it is clear to every realist that the sole source of effective resistance must be the nine million Africans themselves, aided by the million Cape Colored people (descended from half-castes) and the 400,000 Indians born in South Africa. The question that foreign observers ask is what are the prospects of resistance from the combined "non-Europeans" (as they are called). This is the heart of the whole matter.

Stimulus to protest and resistance is ample enough. No country in the world has heaped upon its people disabilities, legal and social, so varied and intense as those suffered by the non-Europeans. A full list would occupy several of these pages. It is enough to mention that Africans have no effective political rights. They cannot live in any except strictly limited urban and rural areas, nor can they own land in any but a minute part of the country. Under the hated pass laws, they cannot move from one district to another or travel abroad without official permits. They are forbidden either by law or by white labor unions to engage in any form of skilled work. They are in effect excluded from the social services and from public amenities (including public libraries). They are prohibited from intermarriage and even from sex intercourse with whites. The countless laws that govern the daily lives of ordinary men and women are enforced by the police in a fashion that approaches a regular reign of terror. Every lawyer knows that an African can be arrested at any time of the day or night and the police have no difficulty in finding, after the arrest, some law under which to charge him with a crime. In consequence, the proportion of people in prison is higher in South Africa than in any other country.

Yet in spite of every imaginable obstacle, the Africans in the cities and towns, who now number about three million, have continued to make economic and political progress. A small middle class has emerged, although it is hardly separated from the working class. Twenty years ago, the ten percent of Africans who were fortunate enough to get some schooling and who were literate, had very modest political aspirations. They asked for more land, more education, free-



dom to move about and to trade. They hardly dared to speak of political rights or to think of equality with white men. The awakening began during World War II and found expression in 1946. In that year, there was a largely spontaneous strike of mine laborers demanding a fourfold increase in their wages of 50 cents a day. At the same time, the recognized leaders of the African community began to demand the repeal of all laws that embodied racial discrimination. After the Malan Government took office in 1948, the unprecedented demand for equality was first heard.

The change was not sudden. African nationalism had had a long adolescence; now it had come of age. Its education had been accelerated by the Communist Party of South Africa and, above all, by the weekly newspaper, *The Guardian*, published in Cape Town since 1937 and controlled by members of the Communist Party. This paper achieved a wider circulation than any other political weekly, especially among the non-Europeans to whom it catered. It was banned by the Malan government in 1952 but a new paper, *Advance*, almost identical with it, appeared a week later. When *Advance* was banned in 1954, another new weekly paper, *New Age*, similar in substance and tone, appeared a week later and still continues to be published, to the chagrin of the government which has not yet found a way to suppress such papers permanently.

The Communist Party at first had the notion, which originated in Moscow, of a "black republic," the full implications of which were somewhat obscure. (In this period, American Communists also supported the idea of a Negro republic in the United States.) The party line changed after 1935, and, what is more important, some able new men began to reorganize and direct the Party. They seem to have realized that what mattered most in South Africa was racial equality and interracial fellowship, and under their influence *The Guardian* proclaimed and pursued a policy of aggressive liberalism. The Party showed some of the faults and weaknesses familiar in Communist Parties almost everywhere, but it is not relevant to describe these here. It is, however, relevant that the Party in South Africa was on the whole conducted and led by men of better education, wiser perceptions, and more ability than might be supposed from the record of Communist Parties in some other countries. The survival of *The Guardian*, and its contents, were perhaps proof enough of that fact.

The wartime climate of world opinion and the trend of events, especially in Asia, also encouraged the African leaders to assert their people's claim to human rights. But the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism in 1948 finally eliminated the last hope that these rights could ever be attained by the normal processes of constitutional government. (For one thing, to increase the three white representatives

## MONTHLY REVIEW

of Africans in the House of Assembly requires a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament.) The fiercer persecution of Indians and the greater hostility shown to the Cape Colored community after Malan's advent to power, led these two groups to recognize Africans as their natural allies. Possibly, too, the outlawing of the Communist Party in 1950 also removed an organization that was a potential (but hardly an actual) rival to the rather ramshackle African National Congress. Whatever the causes—and the continuous growth of industry and urbanization must be kept in mind—new forms of protest began. A united front of the African and Indian Congresses organized the astonishing campaign of passive resistance in 1952. In six months, over 8,000 men and women from these two groups "defied unjust laws." This well-organized, non-violent movement reached a climax with the adherence of a small group of white sympathizers. The government replied with new and heavier penalties. Passive resistance to any law, however trivial, was made a serious crime punishable by years of imprisonment and by flogging, and provision was made to keep political "agitators" indefinitely in custody.

The effects of the Suppression of Communism Act were also felt at this time. "Communism" is defined in some 300 words. It includes "Marxian socialism according to the doctrines of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky." It also includes, in effect, passive resistance and anything that might cause hostility between the white and non-white races. Even more destructive of protest was the power granted the Minister of Justice to "name" anyone who in his opinion is "a Communist," as defined in the Act. An official "Liquidator" was appointed to apply this power. He has named and listed over 500 people of all races, most (but not all) of them members of the former Communist Party. No appeal to the Supreme Court is allowed against the Liquidator's decisions. Once named, a person can be ordered by the Minister to resign from his job if he holds any public office, including an office in a labor union. A number of labor unions have lost key men and women in this way. Moreover—and this is even more fatal to the organization of political protest—a named person can be ordered to refrain from attending any conceivable kind of "gathering," including all political meetings, public or private. This is a punishment unique in the contemporary world. An increasing number of persons have been prosecuted by the vigilant political police for disobeying such orders. By this means, the government has crippled the African and Indian Congresses. The leading men have, one after another, fallen under its ban, whether or not they were ever Communists in the generally accepted meaning of the term. Today what is surprising is not that resistance has been reduced to a low ebb, but that it continues at all.

Yet it does continue. One by one, the lights are going out as

South Africa enters its darkest age. But socialists in other countries would be proud of the unfaltering courage and the unbroken spirit in which men of radical mind have faced adversity. As long as this spirit survives, resistance in one form or another will continue. It is unlikely to take the form of physical violence, except perhaps from bands tried beyond endurance, who will be promptly suppressed. As realists, representative African and Indian leaders recognize that there is no means of effective resistance to oppression while the country is ruled by a government that wields great power quite ruthlessly. The Union is the oldest and much the strongest state in the continent of Africa. It is equipped not only with modern arms, kindly sold by the United States, but also with superior technical instruments for the control of protest and resistance. It would therefore be foolish to imagine that Africans are in a position to emancipate themselves shortly. Moreover, Africans still have much to learn about the arts of political organization (including wise leadership) and about the effective application of non-violent pressures, such as trade boycotts which have produced results in West Africa. And even when they have learnt these things, they may still have to await favorable changes in the world's political circumstances, especially in Britain and the United States, before their rulers can be challenged with any hope of success.

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## BLACK

*I'm crucified  
Not on the tree  
But hour by hour  
Secretly.  
Without respite—  
Without rest—  
The fangs of hate are deeply prest  
Like javelins into my breast.*

*I know the way  
Of loneliness, of cold disdain,  
Know well the numbness and the pain  
Of never having lived—  
Have died  
With every hour—  
Crucified.*

—Georgia Douglas Johnson, *Phylon*,  
First Quarter, 1954

## WORLD EVENTS

*By Scott Nearing*

### At the Summit in Geneva

President Eisenhower, Prime Minister Eden, and Premier Faure met Premier Bulganin in Geneva, Switzerland, on July 18, 1955. The previous parallel meeting was held on July 17, 1945, when Truman, Attlee, and Stalin got together at Potsdam, Germany. The intervening decade has been occupied mostly by embittered, hateful, cold war. The antagonism directed by Washington against Moscow has been outstanding.

How were the chiefs of state brought together once again? Churchill tried repeatedly and failed. Eden also tried repeatedly. This time he succeeded.

Extravagant claims and hopes were made in advance for the Geneva Big Four conference. It was to end the cold war, to establish peace, to inaugurate disarmament, to unify Germany, to put the stamp of its approval on co-existence, to strengthen the United Nations.

Almost always performance lags behind promise. It was so with the Geneva Conference. Diplomatically, little was accomplished. First, the chiefs of state reached an impasse. Then the foreign secretaries followed suit. But Geneva emphatically was not a failure.

President Eisenhower, reporting on Geneva to anti-Communist Congressional leaders and to the nation, declared that the Soviet representatives were sincerely desirous of finding a way to peace. Secretary Dulles gave it as his opinion that the Geneva Conference had pushed back war. The Soviet leaders showed their approval by printing the full text of President Eisenhower's speech in the Soviet press. Prime Minister Eden brought back to the West the most noteworthy trophy—an acceptance from Premier Bulganin and Secretary Khrushchev of an official invitation to visit Great Britain in the spring of 1956. This event, the Prime Minister told a cheering House of Commons, will be a step toward "ending that state of mutual distrust which we call the cold war."

The Prime Minister did not believe that the cold war was over. On the contrary, he foresaw a long series of adjustments in the course of which better relations would be established between East

and West. The Geneva meeting he considered a decisive step in that direction.

During the United Nations anniversary in San Francisco just previous to the Geneva Conference, there was a general feeling of hesitation as well as expectancy as the time for the Geneva meeting approached. The aftermath of Geneva is a green light for the United Nations.

For the time being, at least, there will be no war, and diplomatic efforts can be centered on the establishment of better international relations. Any easing of world tensions which may follow the Geneva Conference of July 1955 will not be due to removal of the causes that gave rise to the cold war, but to the worldwide clamor for peace and the frank recognition by military, scientific, and political leaders that the world cannot afford or permit another general war.

### Meetings of the Peoples

While the bigwigs were meeting in Geneva, the wigless were chumming up in the breadbaskets of the USA and the USSR. A farm delegation from Iowa spent a month, in July and August, touring central European Russia, and a parallel delegation of Russians toured Iowa and other Middle West farm areas.

When we write that the wigless were chumming up, we do not mean maybe. Unhappily for ourselves, we are not able to report, at first hand, the doings of either party, but newsmen and cameramen accompanied both, and the press has been unexpectedly generous in printing stories and photographs, so we have formed some rather clear impressions as to what has been happening on the wigless front.

Reports from the USSR did not surprise us. We have spent considerable time in the Soviet Union and have seen the spontaneous, openhanded enthusiasm, friendliness, and hospitality with which the people, and especially the farm people, treat outsiders, whether they come from some other section of the USSR or from across the frontiers. We have also witnessed the scenes when cheering Soviet crowds welcomed some peace delegation or other group from abroad. Still, we were quite unprepared to read the press accounts by American newsmen touring European Russia with the farm delegation from Iowa. Russian peoples not only turned out by the thousands for official welcomes, offered by towns and villages to the Iowa visitors, but they surrounded their automobiles in the streets, thronged around their hotels, shouted greetings to them as they entered or left the hotel lobbies or appeared at the windows of their rooms. The people of the Soviet Union were glad to see people from the United States, to greet them, and to wish them well.

The real surprise, as far as we were concerned, was not the

## MONTHLY REVIEW

Soviet Union, but Iowa. We have been in Iowa, repeatedly and recently. We have visited there and spoken there, and have come to consider the state as one of the most staunchly conservative of the United States. Des Moines, capital of Iowa, is a citadel of Babbity, yet when the Russian farm delegation reached that city, the press reported 3,000 waiting to greet them.

The Des Moines reception began a triumphal two-week tour which took the Russians from chicken and apple-pie dinners in farm homes, through ice cream and hot-dog stands along the highways, to Kiwanis luncheons and receptions at American Legion headquarters. When it was noised about that the Russian delegates were to visit a farm in Laurens, Iowa, three hundred farmers and their wives drove in from the surrounding countryside to "neighbor" with the Russians. The *New York Times* correspondent, who toured Iowa with the Russians, reported that during the entire trip there was not a single untoward incident. The people of Iowa were as eager to see and greet delegates from Russia as the people of Central European Russia were to see and greet delegates from the United States. People on both sides of the Iron Curtain are equally anxious to "neighbor."

We applaud the remark made by Mr. Khrushchev to United States Ambassador Bohlen at a reception in the Swiss Embassy, immediately after his return from Geneva. He thought the exchange of farmer delegations was the biggest thing since World War II, "in some ways it is even better than Geneva." At long last, the wigless were seizing the initiative from the bigwigs.

### Friendly Words for Peking

One of the most important results of the Geneva Conference will be the meeting, should one occur, between the Foreign Minister of the Peoples Republic of China and the United States Secretary of State. Something more than a year ago, at the meeting called in Geneva to deal with the Indo-China War and the threatening tensions in South East Asia, Mr. Dulles would have no dealings with Chou En-lai. At the Bandung Conference in June 1955, Chou got cheers from his fellow delegates when he stated that the people of China did not desire a war with the United States and proposed that representatives of the two nations negotiate. On August 1, in Geneva, spokesmen for Peking and Washington initiated discussions which will probably lead to a meeting of top-ranking officials of the two countries.

At his press conference on July 26, Mr. Dulles was cautious and guarded in his references to a top-flight meeting to discuss the issues between Peking and Washington. At the same time, he accepted the possibility of such a development.

Mr. Chou, on July 30, told the National Peoples Congress in Peking that the "antagonistic military blocs" now existing in the Pacific area should be replaced by a collective peace pact among countries of the Asian-Pacific region, including the United States. On the subject of negotiations with the United States, Chou said that the Chinese Peoples Republic "will endeavor to make the forthcoming Sino-American talks at the ambassadorial level [the meeting in Geneva in August] pave the way for further negotiations between China and the United States." In the same talk, Mr. Chou proposed, for the second time in two months, that representatives of the Formosa and Peking governments meet to discuss outstanding issues.

If the Chinese Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State do have a meeting, credit must go to Mr. Chou for his initiative in the matter. Nor must we forget that Mr. Dulles has cold-shouldered this proposal as he brushed off the idea that the Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indo-China and the Bandung Conference of 1955 could achieve worthwhile results.

This is more diplomatic heel-dragging. If Secretary Dulles favors world peace, as he has asserted in so many public pronouncements, why does he not *welcome* a meeting with Foreign Minister Chou with the same cordial enthusiasm which the British House of Commons showed for the visit of two top-ranking Soviet spokesmen to London? The peoples of the world want peace. If Dulles wants to take and keep the initiative in international affairs, he must prove himself more anxious for co-existence than the Russians and more eager to negotiate than the Chinese.

### Prisoners of History

Three potent social forces are driving the Washington Government to aggress beyond its own frontiers. The first of these forces is an expanding economy. The second is the age-old illusion that the more wealth people possess, the happier they will be. So the oligarchy, through its emissaries and agents, its expropriators and executioners, roams the earth looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The third force is closely akin. Having lived through a British Century, the 19th, during which the oligarchy of Great Britain told mankind what to do and where to go, power-hungry members and outriders of the American oligarchy propose to usher in an American Century, the 20th, during which they will tell mankind what to do and where to go.

Some of us have suggested to the American oligarchs that it would be juster, more generous, kindlier, and wiser to dedicate our efforts to creating a Human Century, devoted to the task of providing an opportunity for the greatest possible number of healthy and

## MONTHLY REVIEW

happy human beings to live a good life on the planet. The oligarchy calls us un-American, however, and threatens with ostracism, the penitentiary, or worse, those who hold and express such dangerous thoughts.

These three forces—an expanding economy, greed for gold, and lust for power (for short, the American Way of Life)—taught since colonial days, written into our basic laws, and embodied in our present-day institutions, are driving the oligarchy and herding the people of the United States across frontiers and into territories occupied by other peoples. We imagine that this is the most immediate and ominous menace confronting mankind at this present moment in history.

From the standpoint of the oligarchy, such views of the international scene are "unpatriotic," "un-American" and "traitorous." Since the population of the United States constitutes only one-sixteenth of mankind, and since in our social theories based on the principles of popular sovereignty and the greatest good to the greatest number, the welfare of the majority must have top priority, it does not become a tiny minority to put its way of life above the well-being of a vast majority. If these assumptions are correct, the American oligarchy is aggressing against the basic rights of the majority of the human race. The time has come for humanity to enjoy peace and plenty by giving general welfare the priority over special privileges and special interests.

United States policymakers who attempt to chart a course and win success in the field of foreign relations must deal with the representatives of rival nations who are, in many respects, at least their equals and to some degree their superiors. But this is not the chief cause of the failure of the United States oligarchy in a complex situation like that in the far Pacific. Their real problem is historical rather than one of current routine. As representatives of the only remaining first-class capitalist power, American spokesmen must deal with a world that was until recently under all-but-complete control of the chief capitalist nations and empires, but that today is going its own way toward a social pattern which our leaders have called "an international conspiracy."

### The Flop of a Century

"*Exposing the Flop of a Century*" was the caption for a big-time article in *U. S. News & World Report* for April 1, 1955. The subtitle reads: "Story of the Fallacies and Failures of 100 Years of Socialism."

"The Flop of a Century" is a challenging title. Let us scan the pages of the last 100 years of history, beginning around 1850. We



re-read the record of industrial growth; review the expansion of the British, French, German, Austro-Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Dutch, and Belgian empires; observe the advent of the Japanese empire in Asia and the United States' empire in America; and hear the "peace, progress, and prosperity" slogan resounding across a planet almost entirely dominated by the Western powers. In 1910, half a dozen far-flung empires are masters of the earth. Then the scene changes. Peace yields place to war as the great powers of 1914 begin tearing one another to pieces. War is followed by a depression, which continues until the coming of another war, more destructive than that of 1914-1918. War and depression are accompanied by social revolution and the revolt of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa against their Western overlords. Peace, prosperity, and progress have been replaced by war, depression, and disintegration.

We have come to the end of the century, to the 1950s. We have seen the world in 1850, in 1900, and now in 1955. The half dozen great empires of 1850 are shattered. Tsarist Russia and Austria-Hungary have been destroyed. Germany, Italy, and France have suffered disastrous economic upsets and military defeats. Britain's economy has been gutted; her empire has crumbled, her world supremacy is a thing of the past.

Surely there has been a "flop" during the last century, a flop that has altered the course of world history and ushered mankind into a new era. We in *Monthly Review* have watched these developments with close attention and keen anticipation. Perhaps Mr. David Lawrence, editor of *U. S. News*, has overlooked some of the source material of contemporary history? If this is the case, and if he is really concerned to enlighten his readers, he might invite us to contribute to some future issue of *U. S. News* an article on "The Real Flop of the Past Century."

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*What is the meaning of human life, or, for that matter, of the life of any creature? To know an answer to this question means to be religious. You ask: Does it make any sense, then, to pose this question? I answer: The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life.*

—Albert Einstein.

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*In a world of justice who fears dynamite?*

—Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1887

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(continued from inside front cover)

when the witch hunt is abating, it is ironical that Cedric, who played a gallant role in bringing about the change, should himself be a victim. One is reminded of the scene in *All Quiet on the Western Front* in which the hero is shot after the armistice was signed. But we in this country shall continue to hear from Cedric, and we look forward to the time when we shall be welcoming him back. On the other hand, the victory in the Lamont-Shadowitz-Unger case is an important victory over the witch hunters, and over the old McCarthy Committee in particular. It should mean dismissal of the indictment against Harvey O'Connor, the first one to stand up and tell the junior Senator from Wisconsin where to get off; and we hope it does, soon.

Meanwhile, Brownellism is on the warpath in several different directions. The skirmish closest to home for us is the indictment of Lawrence Siegel and Martin Solow, counsel and assistant to the publisher of the *Nation* respectively, for their very peripheral connection with the Matusow recantation. We have a high opinion of the ability and integrity of both men and our best wishes for a speedy vindication go to them—and to the *Nation* which has been doing a good job under very difficult conditions.

Carl Braden writes: "This is the first chance I've had to write and personally thank you and your readers for your assistance in recent months. My imprisonment was made somewhat easier by the knowledge that people like you were working in my behalf. . . . Financial contributions from MR readers have helped and are helping to defray the tremendous cost of fighting a case of this kind. Your many kindnesses to Anne and the many words of encouragement from your readers helped to sustain her during a most trying period. . . . We believe that a publication like MR must be kept going at any cost. With kindest regards." We are sure that our readers will agree with us that all the thanks are due the Bradens for their courageous fight against the evils of segregation.

One of MR's best friends, who prefers to remain anonymous, has come up with a unique method of raising money for the magazine. When the Sweezy family's Labrador Retriever *Winkle* (her society name is *Rupert Pamela*) had pups two years ago (the sire being field and bench champion *Hobbimer's Merganser*), this chap took two females with the idea of organizing a Chain Litter Society (you can see he's in advertising). Now *Anna* and *Natasha* (he's also a Tolstoy fanatic) have duly produced litters of five and nine respectively, and "Labradors for MR" has a chance of paying off—if enough of you want Labradors, that is. There are ten males and four females. To avoid the charge of male chauvinism, we think it best to charge the same price for both on a first-come-first-served basis. So the price is \$50 plus shipping charges to wherever you want them sent. Labradors, in case you don't know, are jet black, about 20 inches high at the shoulders, and can take the pummeling of five-year olds with nothing more than a baleful eye. They are excellent hunting dogs, swim like ducks, and will wag their tails at the postman. These pups were sired by *Ledgeland's Rock* and *Ledgeland's Peter*, fine stock, we are assured, for both bench and field trial purposes. (Bench shows are beauty contests, while field trials are the Decathlon of the canine world.) You get papers, of course, with the pups. We can assure you that \$50 is a very reasonable price for these dogs. If you are looking for a field worker or a pet for the kids, and if you want to help MR at the same time, this is your chance. Write us immediately.

The greatest figure in American socialism, Eugene Victor Debs, was born a hundred years ago, on November 5, 1855. In commemoration of this anniversary, MR is planning to publish a special issue in November devoted to Debs and the future of American socialism.

***For Fall Publication—***

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